

**We claim:**

1. A system, comprising:  
a processor;  
5 a host controller coupled to the processor;  
a card reader coupled to the host controller; and  
wherein the card reader does not apply power to a memory card inserted into the  
card reader if the memory card has not been accessed in a first specified amount of time.
- 10 2. The system of claim 1, wherein the card reader is internal to a computer system  
housing the processor.
3. The system of claim 1, wherein the card reader is external to a computer system  
housing the processor.
- 15 4. The system of claim 1, wherein the memory card is a flash memory card.
5. The system of claim 4, wherein the memory card comprises one of a  
SmartMedia™ (SM) memory card, xD Picture Cards™ (xD), a Memory Stick™, a High  
20 Speed Memory Stick (HSMS), a Memory Stick PRO™ (MSPRO), a Secure Digital (SD)  
memory card, a MultiMediaMemory™ memory card (MMC), NAND Flash, Compact  
Flash™ (CF) or a CF form-factor Advanced Technology Attachment (ATA) hard drive.
6. The system of claim 1, wherein the first specified amount of time is  
25 approximately 0 to 10 seconds.
7. The system of claim 1, wherein if the memory card is accessed, power is applied  
to the memory card.

8. The system of claim 1, wherein the card reader is electrically disconnected from the host controller if the card has not been accessed for a second specified amount of time.

5 9. The system of claim 8, wherein the second specified amount of time is approximately in the range of 0 to 10 minutes.

10. The system of claim 8, wherein a sideband signal is used to signal the card reader to electrically reconnect to the host controller if there is an attempt to access the card.

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11. The system of claim 1, wherein the host controller provides a peripheral bus interface for the card reader.

12. A method, comprising:

15 applying power to a memory card in a card reader coupled to a computer;  
detecting whether a memory card has been accessed during a first specified amount of time;

if a memory card has not been accessed during a first specified amount of time, removing power from the memory card; and

20 if a memory card has been accessed during a first specified amount of time, continuing to power the memory card.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the memory card is a flash memory card.

25 14. The method of claim 12, wherein the first specified amount of time is approximately 0 to 10 seconds.

15. The method of claim 12, wherein if the memory card is accessed, power is applied to the memory card.

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16. The system of claim 12, wherein the card reader is electrically disconnected from the host controller if the card has not been accessed for a second specified amount of time.

5 17. The system of claim 16, wherein a sideband signal is used to signal the card reader to electrically reconnect to the host controller if there is an attempt to access the card.

10 18. The system of claim 16, wherein the second specified amount of time is approximately in the range of 0 to 10 minutes.